

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 4, 2006

The Honorable Jim Nicholson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Nicholson:

We are writing regarding the loss of a computer used by a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) subcontractor which contains the names, social security numbers, health information, and other highly sensitive personal data of veterans who have received treatment at either the Pittsburgh or Philadelphia VA Medical Systems.

According to information provided by your staff late on the afternoon of August 4, 2006, the subcontractor recognized the disappearance of a computer containing the sensitive information on Wednesday, August 2, and notified VA of the breach on Thursday, August 3. We understand that the VA Inspector General, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the FBI are investigating the matter.

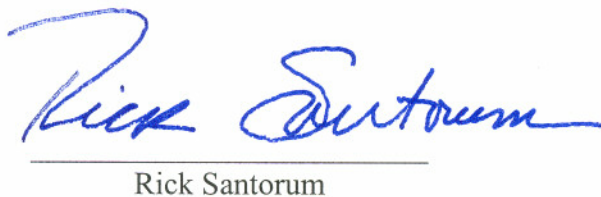
We are deeply troubled by this new data breach, which follows on the footsteps of a stolen laptop computer from the home of a VA employee on May 3, 2006, which put at risk similar personal information of 26 million veterans and active duty servicemembers. We urge you to take any and all steps necessary to recover the lost computer. In addition, it is absolutely essential that every possible action is taken, without delay, to inform and protect these veterans whose personal information has been put at risk.

Please keep us informed as this process moves forward.

Sincerely,



Arlen Specter



Rick Santorum